

Message Text

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20/15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05

PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 IO-10 CU-02

NIC-01 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /077 W
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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3154

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0152

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MPOL, CH

SUBJECT: CHIEF OF STAFF AND HEAD OF GPD NAMED

1. AFP CORRESPONDENT ROMENSKY HAS INFORMED US THAT, ALTHOUGH NOT YET RELEASED ON NCNA, MFA INFORMATION DEPARTMENT HAS CONFIRMED TO HIM THAT TENG HSIAO-PING HAS BEEN NAMED CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE PLA AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAO HAS BEEN APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF THE GENERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT.

2. COMMENT: THIS INFORMATION CONFIRMS INTELLIGENCE REPORTS FROM HONG KONG CONCERNING THESE APPOINTMENTS. THIS HIGHLY UNUSUAL MOVE, WHICH WE FRANKLY HAD DOUBTED WOULD TAKE PLACE, PUTS TWO VICE PREMIERS OF THE STATE COUNCIL INTO KEY CONTROL POSITIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY. IT ALSO PLACES YEH CHIEN-YING, THE MINISTER OF
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DEFENSE, IN A POSITION OF HAVING TWO OF HIS NOMINAL SUBORDINATES IN

THE MILITARY STRUCTURE OUTRANK HIM IN THE STATE COUNCIL. THE MOVE STRIKES US AS YET ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO ASSERTING PARTY CONTROL OVER CHINA'S MILITARY STRUCTURE AND THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN ACCOMPLISHING THIS OBJECTIVE.

3. TENG HAS HAD LONG EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH MANY OF THE REGIONAL COMMANDERS, GOING BACK TO HIS SZECHUAN DAYS. HE MAY BE THE ONLY MAN UNDER CHOU HAVING BOTH THE CLOUT AND THE CONNECTIONS TO ENABLE HIM TO MEDIATE BETWEEN FACTIONS WITHIN THE PLA. CHANG, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS A RELATIVE NEWCOMER, HAVING RISEN DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND SERVED AS POLITICAL COMMISSAR OF THE NANKING MILITARY REGION. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAS BEEN PLACED IN HIS NEW POSITION TO BALANCE TENG BUT RATHER SUSPECT HE WAS CHOSEN BY CHOU AS THE MAN WHO COULD DO THE JOB.

4. THESE APPOINTMENTS RAISE ANEW THE ALREADY PUZZLING QUESTION OF THE DIVISION OF FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE STATE COUNCIL. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE TENG DEVOTING FULL TIME TO MILITARY AFFAIRS, AND HE HAS SAID HE IS NOT A MILITARY MAN. UNLESS CHOU EN-LAI WERE TO RESUME A NEARLY FULL SCHEDULE - A POSSIBILITY WE CANNOT RULE OUT BUT WHY LLE UIND UNLIKELY - TENG HAS OTHER CRITICAL FUNCTIONS TO PERFORM. IT MAY BE THAT HE WILL SERVE AS NOMINAL CHIEF OF STAFF, DELEGATING HIS POWER AND PRESTIGEC TO VICE CHIEFS SUCH AS YANG CHENG-WU WHO WILL ACT IN HIS NAME.
HOLDRIDGE

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